

Vel Vet
SHOW CARDS

*A HANDBOOK
of Lettering
with Special
Suggestions
on the Use of
Vel Vet*

By
Harry Lawrence Gage



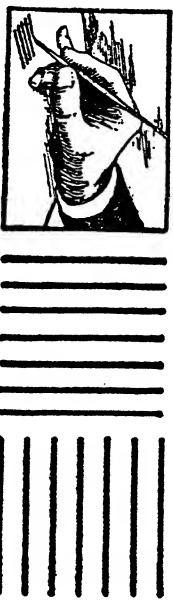
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BRUSH PRACTICE



L V X C O S G G

PEN EXERCISES

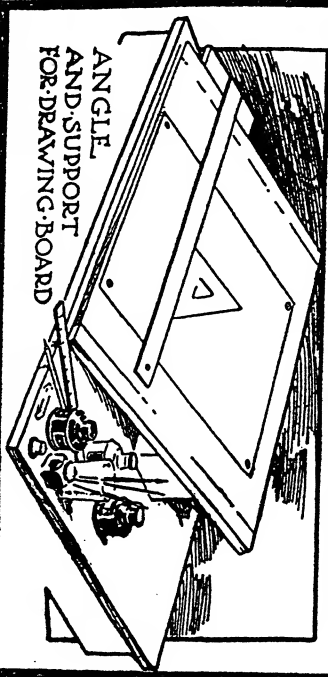
ISOZATE



EULING WITH A BRUSH



TEACHING EDGE LINES



ANGLE AND SUPPORT FOR DRAWING BOARD



Figure 1

VEL - VET SHOW CARDS



It is the purpose of this handbook to explain in a simple manner the principles which govern good lettering and to exemplify such tricks of the sign-writer's craft as will enable the layman to accomplish for himself the work which has hitherto been a mystery and an undue expense. Beginning with the simplest handling of brush, further practice will lead to the development of refined letters.

MATERIALS AND THEIR HANDLING

A table of sufficient size to hold drawing-board and instruments will be needed. The drawing-board may be any large rectangular board, 20 by 26 inches or more. It should be tilted as shown in Fig. 1 so that its surface is raised more squarely toward the worker, and the support should be firm and rigid under the hand. If a box be placed under the back edge it may be moved forward or back to change the angle.

The instruments may include many of the tools of the mechanical draughtsman, but the necessary ones are a plain T-square, a six-inch triangle, a compass and a pair of dividers. A dozen plain steel thumb-tacks, a soft pencil eraser, a piece of Art Gum for cleaning purposes, one each of Sonneken Pens, 1, 3, 5, two or three common penholders, a 3H and HB drawing-pencil and some brushes make up a list which is longer than it is expensive. The best brushes for lettering are most economical, the red-stable being preferred in numbers 5, 7 and 11. The T-square is for laying out the lines of lettering which make up a card and is used by holding the head against the left side of the drawing-board with the left hand, when it can be freely moved up and down to make horizontal lines, and if the board be perfectly square it may be used along the top to make verticals. The paper is secured to the board with a thumb-tack in each corner, being first laid square with the T-square along its upper edge. The triangle is used along the blade of the T-square to draw verticals and is a handy straight-edge in general.



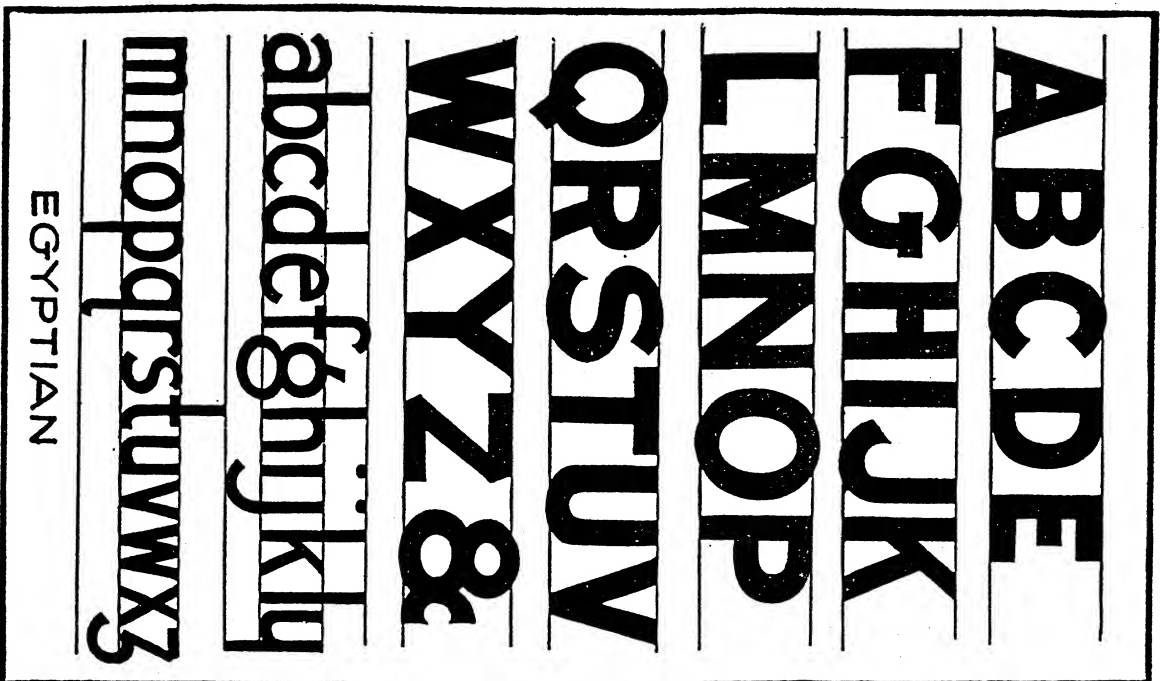


Figure II



Brushes and instruments should receive good care, and be put away clean and in neat order. During their use, pens should be frequently wiped with a bit of linen and brushes must be well treated at all times. Never allow them to dry with ink or color in them, which makes them lose their point. Rinse them thoroughly and press the bristles between the thumb and finger to remove the water, rotating the brush slightly to retain its point.

Paper or cardboard on which to work may be obtained from any printer or stationer. It is not necessary to get the expensive pen boards or drawing-paper, the cheaper bristols and ticket board answering every purpose. Photographers' mount board is excellent for show-cards of a permanent nature, and for the very highest class of work choice cover papers in beautiful colors and textures may be obtained. The bristol and mount boards usually come in sheets 22 by 28 inches in size, and economy will dictate that cards be either a half, a quarter or some other even fractional part of the full sheet to save waste.

Practice work can be done on heavy wrapping paper. A transparent sheet of glass, however, is a great help to the beginner in learning to copy, and it is economical to use, as the glass can be easily washed clean after the work has been completed.

VEL VET SHOW CARD COLORS

The quality of colors used is all-important. Good show-card colors must be finely ground, flow readily from the brush, cover perfectly and dry quickly with a smooth finish. Vel Vet Show Card Colors possess all these desirable characteristics and are used with great success in reproducing the rich effects of the work done with artists' expensive water colors. Vel Vet Show Card Colors are made in twelve shades, including a good white and both a dull and lustrous black.

Although Vel Vet Show Card Colors are identical in effect with imported water colors used by some artists and designers, Vel Vet colors have in their natural creamy consistency an added advantage: over tube, cake or powdered colors, which makes them ready for instant use direct from the convenient wide-mouth bottles in which Vel Vet is furnished. No preparation or mixing with water is necessary, and a smooth, even flow from the brush insures clean work.



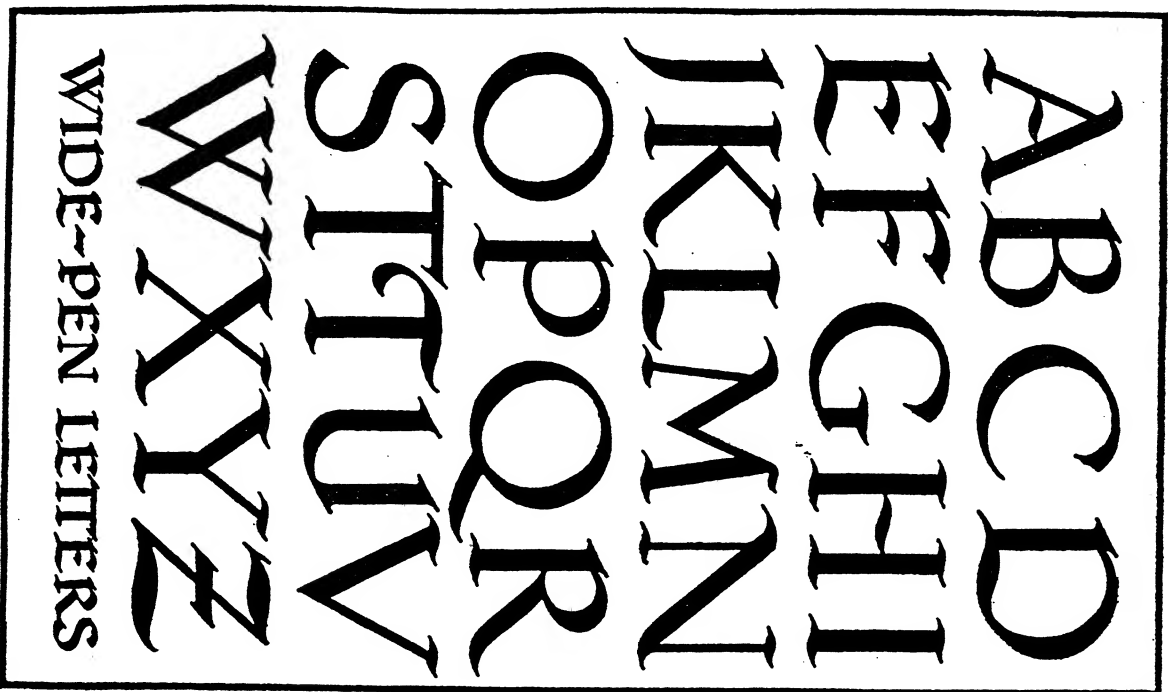


Figure III

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Whenever a variety of color, soft artistic finish and the full resources of an artist's palette are needed, the card-writer will find that he is amply equipped to produce these results when he is supplied with Vel Vet.

If it is desired to brush one color over another, it may be accomplished without danger of spreading by waiting a short time until the first color is thoroughly dry.

A subsequent page in the booklet deals with the judicious use of colors on show cards. The theme of Simplicity there expounded holds equally good with the wide variety of possibilities in Vel Vet Colors. The many uses of cards, however, bring about a great difference in governing conditions, and simplicity itself may take any one of a score of forms. Then the wide latitude of Vel Vet colors is particularly suitable. They are a valuable resource for the card-writer who must exploit dainty wares as well as fantastic, variegated and highly specialized stocks where both window and store display are widely diverse. It must be insisted, however, that while the effective use of color may necessitate the possession of all of the twelve tints, genuine taste in color will not consist in splashing indiscriminately from each of the twelve bottles upon one card.

THE WIDE-PEN ALPHABET

With the knowledge of the letter shapes gained from the study of Fig. II, the understanding of Fig. III becomes simpler. This is done with the wide Round-writing pen and should be thoroughly mastered, for it is the quickest and easiest of all the alphabets, hence most valuable to the card-writer.

It perhaps has been already noticed that when the pen is held in the normal way, the vertical strokes and lines running down from left to right will be the full width of the pen. The horizontal lines and those running up from left to right will be thin, being made across the nibs of the pen. It is apparent then that all the letters will be composed of a combination of these thick and thin elements. This characteristic must be carefully studied, for it has the determining influence in the formation of the Roman alphabet, the most important of all.

Before drawing the letters in ink, go over Fig. III with a dry pen held in the regular grasp. Their construction will thus be made more clear. Then lay out a series of lines about five-eighths of an inch apart and try writing some letters.

7



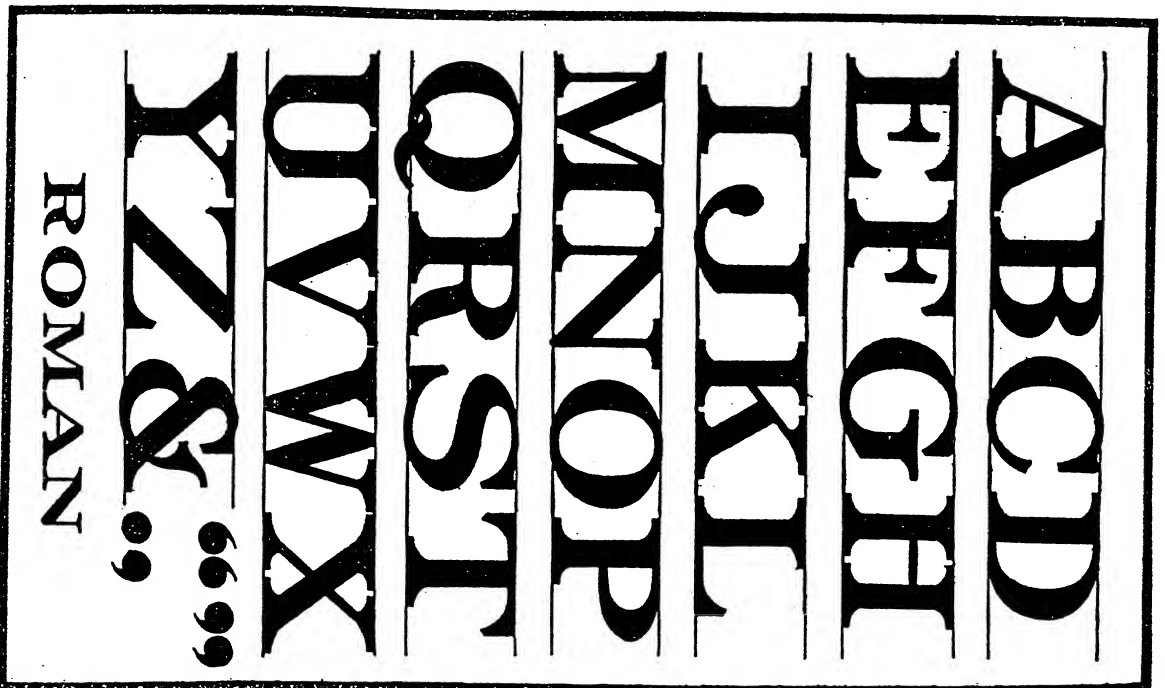


Figure IV



Indicate the construction of the letters lightly in pencil, but write them boldly, a single firm stroke to each element. The pen exercise in Fig I shows the successive strokes which form some of the letters. Note that the pen is always kept moving ahead, the strokes moving up and down or forward but not backward against the nibs. The small arrows in Fig. I clearly indicate the procedure. Occasionally the pen will have to be turned slightly to keep the letters uniform in appearance. It would be natural in the N, for instance, to make three heavy down strokes, but this would give the letter undue weight, so its verticals are made light by turning the pen sideways. The strokes for the serifs are normal.

This alphabet need not be learned exactly as given in the plate. But it should be practiced until it becomes like handwriting, an easy expression for the many small price and name cards which have to be written. The wide pens are not large enough for letters over three-quarters of an inch in height unless more than one stroke be used to get the width of the element. Wider pens in different forms are made, or flat brushes may be used successfully for large letters.

ROMAN CAPITALS

Fig. IV should receive careful study, for it is the basic alphabet of the entire craft of lettering. We have approached it through two others and find that it has the letter design of Fig. II with the alternation of thick and thin letter elements of Fig. III. Throughout the whole, however, there is a dignity and refinement of design which none of the others have, and since it has always been used for inscriptions in stone, it is the most formal letter available.

Without the experience with the wide pen in Fig. III, it would at first seem that the alternation of thick and thin elements in the Roman were governed only by taste. But a careful comparison, letter for letter, shows that the "accenting" of each letter is absolutely governed by the principles of the pen alphabet. Thus it is possible to classify the variations in element width. With the pen letters in mind, then, it may be stated:

I. Those lines which correspond to an up stroke of the pen must always be thin.



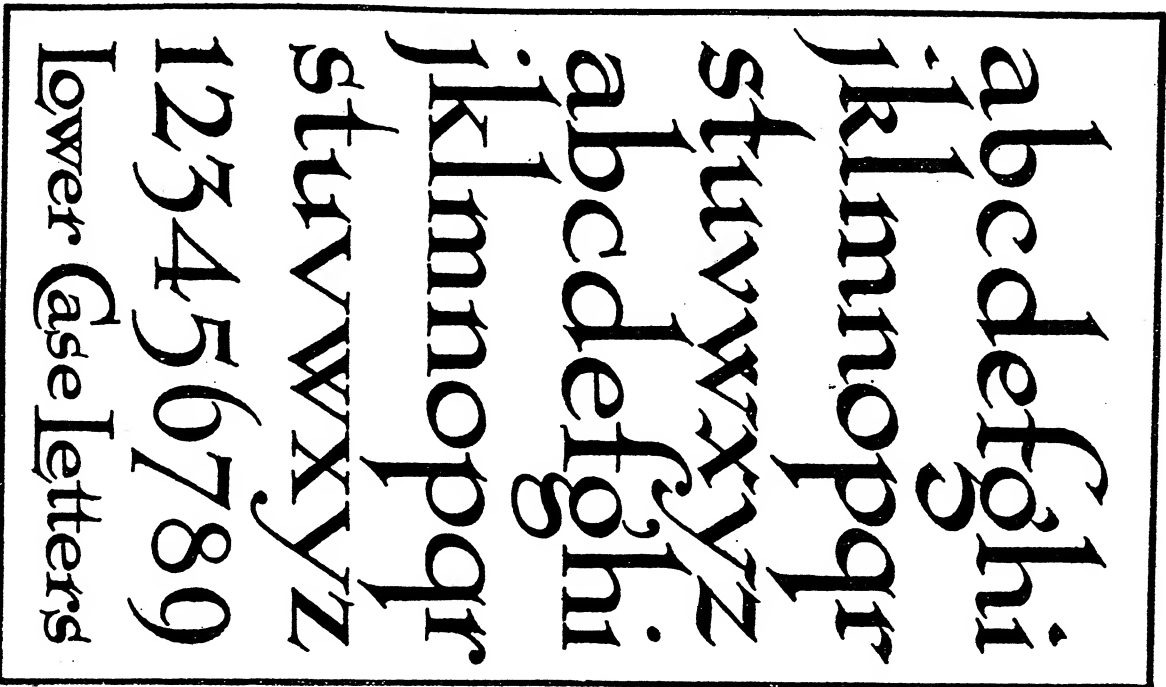


Figure V



II. Lines corresponding to a down stroke must always be thick.

III. Curved lines will be a graduation from the first width to the second.

IV. Horizontal lines will always be thin.

There are then but two widths in the elements of the Roman and they are definitely distributed.

It remains true that the pointed and round letters must slightly cross the guide line. The serifs or finishing strokes in the Roman are very much refined, due to the influence of the stonemason's chisel. They vary but little through the alphabet and should be carefully drawn.

There is no rule for the actual thickness of the letter elements and the work in hand must determine how heavy the letters are to be made. As the letters become heavier they lose much of their delicacy of design, a fair standard being to make the thick element about one-eighth the height of the letters and the thin element about a half the width of the thick ones. Whatever the weight used they must not vary throughout the drawing except to keep the general appearance even. If, in the finished work, there are spots that look lighter than the lettering around them, the elements in that place need to be made a little heavier and vice versa.

Because of the importance of the Roman alphabet its letters may be considered for their separate characteristics, in order that their construction may be fully comprehended.

A is an inverted angle crossed just below its actual center with the horizontal. The angle must not tip to either side, which is equally true of the angles of M, V, W, X, and Y.

The lobes of the letter B are semi-circles which merge together and into the horizontals which start off from the vertical. In it, as well as in the P and the R, the lobes must be drawn without a perceptible bump or angle. In the B the upper lobe is always the smaller to preserve a feeling of balance in the letter.

C, G, O and Q are based on a full circle, hence need considerable practice. The heavy bars are slightly heavier than the heavy bars of the square letters.

D is the arc of a full circle merged into horizontals.

E, F and L are similar and vary only in the number and placing of the horizontal elements.





THE ABOVE THREE SETS
OF NUMERALS ARE BEST
ADAPTED FOR SHOW CARDS.



Figure VI

H is usually kept wide. Its horizontal bar with those of E and F, lies just above the center of the letter.

The vertical elements of the M may sometimes be slanted outward slightly from the center. They should always be so placed on the center "V," however, that the outer angles which they form are symmetrical.

N should be kept wide. Its apparent violation of the rules of accent is due to the influence of the wide pen.

S is difficult to draw and must be practiced well. The upper part is always a little smaller than the lower, and the accent is always through the center and not upon the lobes.

U is the same as the wide pen letter with the heavy bar on both sides. Its base is a semicircular lobe.

LOWER-CASE ALPHABETS

The small or lower-case letters shown in Fig. V are useful for large masses of lettering for which capitals would be too large and too slow to letter. The upper alphabet in the plate is done with the wide pen. It is unnecessary to explain the letter forms in detail, for while their shape must be learned and practiced, their characteristics are predetermined by the wide pen. Note, however, that they are about half the height of the capitals and that the width of the pen is at least a size smaller than that of the corresponding capitals. This is because the elements of the lower case come so much closer together that they must be thinner. In drawing, the lower-case letters must be provided for with an extra guide line to determine their height, which may vary as needed. When the capitals are large, the lower-case will be effective if they are relatively quite small.

It is easy to understand the relation between the wide pen lower-case and the Roman which is just below it. As in the Roman capitals, it is merely a refinement of design with little change in form that makes the difference. The Roman letters are more formal and perhaps a little more legible, but they take much longer to draw. They gain a certain distinction of form from the tipped accents of the round letters and a constant sense of motion forward through the line.

The numerals or figures are given in the Roman form. They may easily be adapted to the other styles, however, by merely treating them in the same way as to element width, serifs,





Figure VII



etc. Always keep them very plain and never neglect the emphasis which should be given to a number or price. The dollar sign is an S with two thin vertical elements drawn through it (\$).

THE ITALIC LETTER

The Italic (again the printers' term) is a sloped Roman which is really more closely derived from hand-writing. As shown in Fig. VII, it is a letter more to be done with the brush or drawing-pen than with the wide pen. With the latter, however, very rapid and interesting Italic letters may be made (see Fig. XII), so that it will be well worth while to learn to make them in all three ways. A very useful pen may be made by grinding down a coarse brass stub pen until its broadened point will make a wide line in whatever direction the pen be moved.

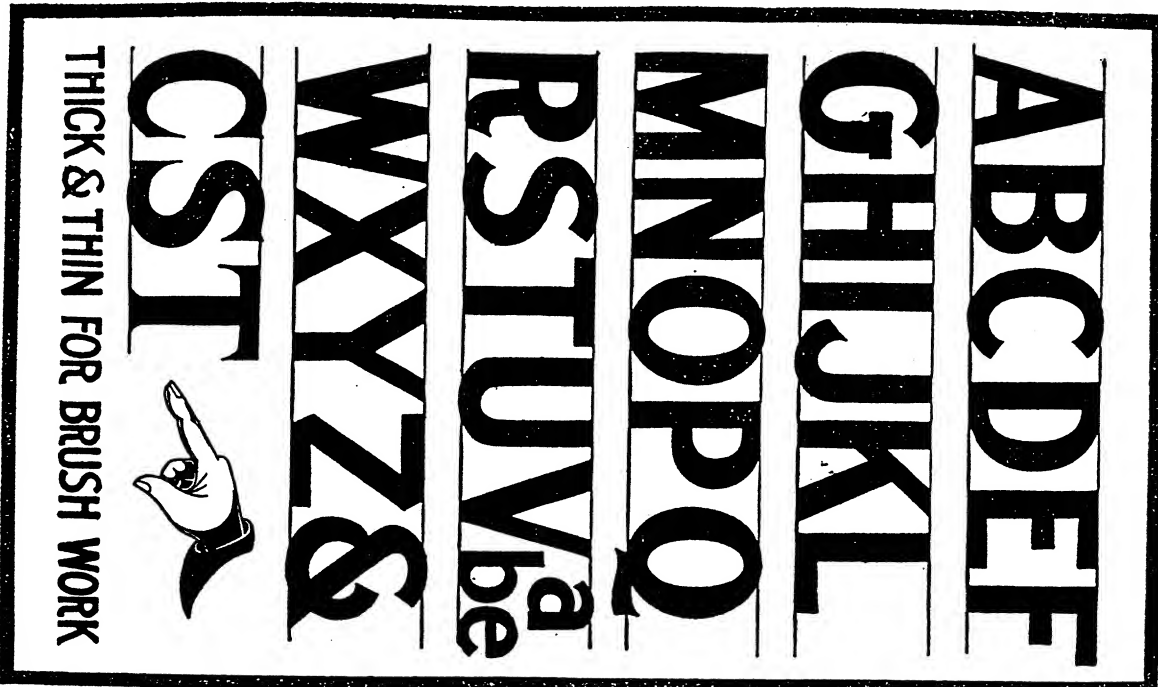
First in importance in the construction of the Italic is the slant of the letters. There is no rule for the exact slope, but once it is chosen it must be carefully kept throughout the drawing. This can only be accomplished by ruling the sheet full of lightly penciled parallel lines indicating the desired slant. These will guide the hand and eye.

It will be well to make a plate of carefully rendered Italic, though there is rarely occasion to use the capitals alone. In the freely flourished style shown here, the chief study must be devoted to the lower-case letters and to the peculiar swing and motion of the letter coming from the oval shapes which carry through the alphabet.

THE THICK AND THIN ALPHABET

The Thick and Thin Alphabet is constructed like the "Roman." The Thick Bars are about the same thickness on the same size of letters, but you will find the Thin Bars of the "Thick & Thin" about one-half as heavy as the Thick Bars. On page 16, Fig. VIII, you will find three letters, C, S, T, spurred. This may be done to all the letters of the alphabet if desired. The lower-case letters A, B, E, are made exactly like the Egyptian with the main bars of the letters a little heavier. By making the main bars of Egyptian letters (both Capitals and small letters) heavier, you change the whole alphabet from Egyptian to Thick and Thin.





THICK & THIN FOR BRUSH WORK

COLOR

On the use of color much may be said that is purely theoretical, but the rules for its use on show-cards can be expressed in one word—*Simplicity*. This is synonymous with good taste. Whatever the color used, a little of it counts for much more than a garish display.

With black, the color most commonly used is a bright orange red. The bright red should be used in moderation, as it is in the various plates in this booklet, to form border lines, initial letters, and occasional display lines for emphasis. Be careful to carry the illumination through the card—that is, do not use the color in a single spot. Of course, the cardboard on which you work may be obtained in red or other colors. It must be remembered, however, that a square foot of brilliant color in a store or window forms a spot of attraction which may detract from desired effects and it is safer to use white and soft grays on which bright color may be placed judiciously.

To secure color harmony on cards, there is but one absolutely sure method for the man who has not an "eye for color." That is to keep to variations of a single color on a given card. On a light brown sheet, for instance, to use dark brown and a medium brown tint for borders and the like. Dark brown Vel Vet is mixed with black, red and yellow. The dark color may be lightened to form a harmonious tint by the addition of white. If you use blue for a card, make a tint with white for the second color. It is rarely necessary or in good taste to use more than two colors on a card.

The limitations of space make it impossible to enter deeper into the discussion of color, and the card-writer must depend upon his taste if he seeks elaborate combinations. For practically every purpose, however, the color range of Vel Vet will suffice. Colors may be "softened" or grayed by the mixture of both black and white. This is worth practicing to secure harmony with stock or window display, for the barbaric clamor of pure colors is rarely pleasing.



Figure VIII



Imported novelty
FOULARD
exclusive shades.
Second Floor

**HIGH GRADE
UPHOLSTERY**

VELOUR
\$2.00
Yd.

Figure IX



COLOR COMBINATIONS

The following contrasting combinations for two pure colors are harmonious and preferable in the order that they follow the first color of each set:

With **BLACK**: Orange, light red, light green or almost any color in small contrasting quantities.

With **DARK BLUE**: Orange, light red or yellow.

With **LIGHT BLUE**: Orange, brown, dark red or yellow.

With **DARK GREEN**: Light red, orange, dark red, yellow or light green.

With **LIGHT GREEN**: Orange, light red, brown, lavender or dark green.

With **DARK RED**: Light green, light blue or dark green.

With **LIGHT RED**: Dark green, light green or dark blue.

With **BROWN**: Light green, light blue, orange, light red or yellow.

With **ORANGE**: Dark blue, light blue, dark green, light green or brown.

With **YELLOW**: Lavender, dark blue, dark green, light blue or brown.

With **LAVENDER**: Yellow or light green. (Lavender must always be carefully used and for special rather than general purposes.)

The pure Vel Vet colors blend well and may be mixed to match any given color if necessary. To do this, begin with the pure color nearest to the desired tint. If it is necessary to lighten it, use white, adding a touch of red, yellow or brown to "warm" it if needed or a bit of green or blue to make it colder in tone. If it is necessary to deepen the pure color, add black if the original be blue or green; add brown if the original be yellow or orange; add brown or blue if the original be red. Make purple, violet and lavender colors with the reds and blues. Make the greens brighter or colder by adding yellow or blue. Make grays with black and white with a little brown or green to modify. In any case, in making up a color to match a sample, use small amounts of the pure colors and add the changing colors very gradually. Otherwise it is very easy to waste undue amounts of color.



*We announce the
Addition of a Fine
Stationery
& Boxed Papers*

OUR PATRONS
will find here
fulfilled every
need of correspondence

**REAL ESTATE
AND
INSURANCE.**

Figure X



*In Progress -
Our Annual
Inventory
Sale*

*There will not
be an old piece
of merchandise
in the building
after April first
- G. E. -*

Latest Novelties - Stylish
RIBBONS
Moderately Priced

Figure XI



**Smart
Effects
in New
Spring
Neck
Wear
\$1**

20

LAYING OUT CARDS

In the examples of the use of lettering in this booklet, note that the words are always grouped into solid masses, usually rectangular shapes which square up strongly and are carefully margined on the card. In laying out a card, then, the first thing to do is to divide the wording up into its natural groups and to select the one which needs emphasis, the display line. This, of course, depends upon the individual matter. It is then best to make a small rough sketch in pencil wherein you treat the groups of words as shapes, arranging them to make the best design possible. On this small "spotting," you can plan the color scheme also, so that when you start the large card you are quite certain about the layout for the whole.

The amount of words to a line of given height and width is difficult to determine at first, but experience makes it simpler. It is usually possible to see whether the matter will fit the space allowed to it by writing in the wording on the small sketch.

Particular attention should be given to the matter of margins. Lettering on a card should always be placed so that the widest margin comes at the bottom, the two side margins are usually kept equal and often uniform with the top. It is also possible to have all the margins unequal as on the pages of this booklet. In that case there is a regular progression in width from the narrow inside, to the top, then the outside and considerably the widest of all, the bottom.

Border lines on a card serve to hold the lettering together and to add a decorative effect. They are treated in various ways in the examples shown and are usually the only ornamentation needed. In Fig. IX the upper border may be either a mat, cut from a sheet of gray, or it may be painted with gray color. The lower border carries with it a slight effect of the glove stitch which accentuates the idea. Excellent effects may be thus secured without the time necessary to do a border like that on the title page. Where the subject suggests a special treatment, as in the upper corner of Fig. XI, it is often possible to make an effective design with a few lines and a bit of color.

Initial letters are always interesting where there is enough copy to warrant their use. They may be very simple, with slight suggestion of design or may be more elaborately drawn. It is an excellent scheme to keep a scrap-book wherein may be



The Best
SHOW
CARDS
are always
the result of
original ideas
and designs
worked from
the standard
alphabets found
in this book.

Smart
Spring
Styles
for
Dressy
Men

Little Citizen
SHOES
FOR CHILDREN.

Figure XII



pasted clippings from every source. Thus a large number of initials and border ideas may be kept available and the time necessary to make a new design is saved. Where an initial comes ahead of a large amount of lettering, as in Fig. IX, it should be kept squared up with some relation to the lettering, that is opposite an even number of lines, lining with them at top and bottom.

White Vel Vet on dark or black stock makes an excellent effect which demands only skillful handling of the brush.

After making the first card, make a tracing of it which will show the location of the lines, etc. This may be retraced onto heavy paper and the open spaces cut away, leaving the stencil around which to run the pencil for subsequent cards.

The gray tone on the title page was spattered on with a stiff brush. The parts which should remain white are covered with protecting masks cut from heavy paper. The ink or color is used in the bristles of the brush, an old tooth-brush being the best to use. The tone is made when the bristles are rubbed with a match or toothpick.

THE FITNESS OF THINGS

The final word must be *consistency*. All that we do must fit its purpose; if it be a card for a hardware store it must be bold and direct, for a stationer more refined, and for a dry-goods store done both with careful lettering and color. But in them all must be simplicity. The alphabets which have been shown are few in number but large in their possibilities. Color has been discussed with simplicity in view. Add then such drawing and design as the card-writer may acquire and fit the combination to your purposes of publicity.



